

The rise of the 'E-resistor': Towards a new perspective on work-based New Communication Technology (NCT) non-use

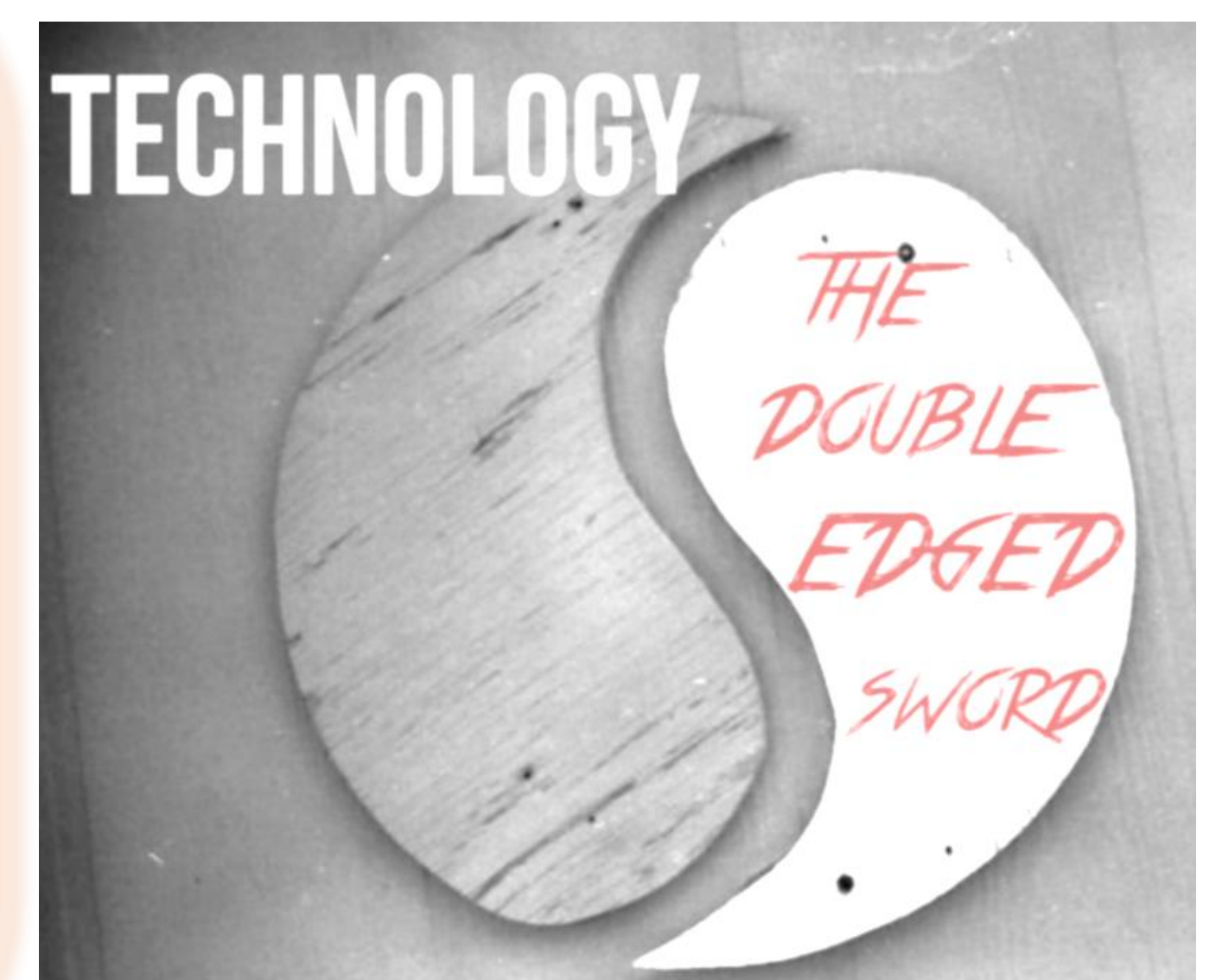
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Background

- The internet has fuelled the diffusion of electronic devices and augmented the use of New Communication Technology (NCT) such as E-mail, Skype, Slack thereby engendering an '**always-on**' and '**constantly connected**' environment (Mazmanian, Orlikowski and Yates, 2013).
- Research has broadly classified NCTs as personal use and work-based use.
- Easy and constant access of NCT's on the same device blurs the boundaries of **work and personal use** (Korunka and Hoonakker, 2014).
- Recently Human-Computer Interaction academics have called for research that **bridge the gap** between designing technology that helps overall well-being **to flourish** whilst enabling efficiency and productivity (e.g. Hassenzahl, 2010; Peters, Calvo and Ryan, 2018).
- To enhance well-being and productivity, individuals, organisations (e.g. Volkswagen) and even countries (e.g. France) are possibly moving towards **resisting** or reducing their **communication technology** use (Kiesler, Kang and Madden, 2013).

A review of NCT resistance

- In a systematic content analysis of online texts on the resistance of digital/social media, Foot (2014) noted an emergence of '**pushback**' against digital media calling for '**caution**' and '**balance**' in the **use of digital media**.
- Ollier-Malaterre, Rothard and Berg (2013) theorised a framework about **online boundary management behaviours** wherein individuals are making cognisant choices about their social media use by segmenting or integrating their personal and professional identities.
- Murthy and Mani (2013) identified **technology fatigue** and **switching cost** or **loss aversion** as the most consistent factors that influence **technology rejection**.
- Body of academic (e.g. Satchell and Dourish, 2009; Wyatt, 2014; Hesselberth, 2018), non-academic (e.g. Lyons, 2015; Ong, 2018) and social media reports on the resistance to technology, smartphone and social media (Hefner and Vorderer, 2017).



Findings

- The review confirms that individuals have mixed responses towards the use of NCT's. Therefore, **resistance towards NCTs** is not just a mere negation of adoption but possibly an increasingly **distinct phenomenon that needs to be studied exclusively**.
- All academic and non-academic research on NCT resistance is carried out within the realms of social media, smartphone and personal use. Scholarly **research on work based NCT resistance is next to none**.

Theories

- Different life stages may potentially impact an individual's choice of resisting work-based NCT used.
- The subsequent coping mechanisms employed are directly linked to available resources.
- Taken together, the current research was conceptualised by employing the **Selection, Optimisation and Compensation** (SOC, Baltes and Baltes, 1990) and **Conservation of Resources** (COR, Hobfoll, 1989, 2002) theories.

Research Aims

The aim of this review was to highlight the paradoxes in the use of work-based NCT and the need to study work-based NCT resistance as a distinct phenomenon.

The review puts forward the concept of '**E-resistors**' – individuals who knowingly choose to resist, avoid, or reduce their use of work-based NCTs.

Next Steps

- A two-stage research will be conducted to operationalise e-resistors.
- The first exploratory study is to understand how and why people resist work-based NCTs. Interviews are in progress to collect data to define the different types of e-resistors

Are people resisting **work based NCTs**? Will people have the **autonomy** and self-confidence to be **e-resistors** in the **workplace**? Will colleagues, managers or clients support this decision and **empower** their choice?

Research Questions

- Who are these e-resistors?
- Why are they e-resisting?
- What behaviours are e-resistors engaging in?
- How are they managing their resources to deal with the pressures of work-based NCTs?
- Are different life stages influencing and individuals choice of resisting work-based NCTs?

